

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 56

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Michael Austin "Mike" Fitts for receiving the 2007 Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those outstanding state officials who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as leaders within their respective professions of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Michael Austin "Mike" Fitts, who was selected to receive the 2007 Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture; he will collect the award at the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2007 National Convention and Design Exposition in San Antonio in May; and

WHEREAS, a native of Jackson, Tennessee, Mike Fitts graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire and attended Tulane University; he was commissioned as an officer in the United States Navy and served four years with the Underwater Demolition Team, now called SEALs; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, Mr. Fitts earned a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in 1957 and a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1971, graduating *magna cum laude* and first in his class at the University of Tennessee; in 1980, he acquired a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the Nashville School of Law and is now licensed in Architecture, Engineering, and Law in the State of Tennessee. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society; and

WHEREAS, prior to his career with the State of Tennessee, Mike Fitts was employed as an engineer with consulting firms in Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana, and was involved in the home construction industry and engineering consulting business in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Mr. Fitts became the second person in Tennessee to serve as State Architect, a position established in 1955 by the state Building Commission to direct staff support in its oversight of all building construction and renovation, demolition, land purchase, and leasing; he has served under seven governors during the past thirty-five years and has overseen the construction of more than four billion dollars worth of public work; and

WHEREAS, as a part of his duties as State Architect, Mike Fitts is the unofficial quasi-curator of the State Capitol and provides an architectural perspective of all State buildings of historical interest; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of Mr. Fitts's award-winning architecture includes faithful restoration of Strickland's State Capitol, the public-private partnership of the James K. Polk State Office Building/Tennessee Performing Arts Center, the Tennessee Bicentennial Mall that preserves the view of the State Capitol, the National Civil Rights Museum that honors the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Master Plan that envisions a true research campus based on sustainability principles; and

WHEREAS, the designer's manual program that Mike Fitts developed for Tennessee blends aesthetics with the use of new technologies and serves as a national model; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fitts's numerous professional memberships include the National Association of State Facilities Administrators, the American Institute of Architects' National Committee on Public Architecture, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, the Advisory Board of the University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design, and the Tennessee and American Bar Associations; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fitts is a member of the Panel of Arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association, a State Supreme Court Mediator, a member of the Prevailing Wage Commission, the former Chairman of the Southeastern Conference on Capital Outlay and Construction Administration, the 1990 Chairman of the National American Institute of Architects' Committee on Public Architecture, and the 1990 President of the National Association of State Facilities Administrators of the Council of State Governments; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Mike Fitts was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, one of the highest honors the AIA can bestow; along with the award given

by the Center for Excellence in Development, they are well deserved and appropriate honors for Mr. Fitts's exemplary thirty-five years as State Architect; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fitts epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; he is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Polly, whom he married in the Tennessee State Capitol, their four children, and seven grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mike Fitts for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Michael Austin "Mike" Fitts upon receiving the Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture, honor and commend him for his exemplary and meritorious service to the State of Tennessee, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.